

La Voz de Colorado fills a real need and it has given the Hispanic Community in the 1st Congressional District a strong political and economic voice. Under Ms. Padilla's leadership as Publisher, the newspaper has experienced tremendous growth and she intends to further expand the newspaper to meet the needs of the growing Hispanic marketplace. The tradition excellence and solid commitment to speaking for Colorado's Hispanics has made La Voz de Colorado a standard bearer for journalistic excellence in the Denver Metro area.

In addition to her work at La Voz de Colorado, Wanda Padilla is active in the oldest Catholic congregation in Denver, Sacred Heart Church. Ms Padilla also serves as a foster mom for her godchild and his sister. While she admits these duties interrupt her tough schedule, her work with children is a labor "from the heart."

Please join me in commending Wanda Padilla. It is the strong leadership that she exhibits on a daily basis that continually enhances our lives and builds a better future for all Americans. Her life serves as an example to which we should all aspire.

IN CELEBRATION OF CELESTE,
TEXAS

HON. RALPH M. HALL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 7, 2000

Mr. HALL of Texas. Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to pay tribute to the citizens and former residents of Celeste, Texas, who are celebrating the rich heritage of their hometown with a community celebration on September 3, 2000. Founded more than 100 years ago, the town of Celeste has endured and thrived due to the hard work, devotion, and community spirit of those who have chosen to live and work and raise their families there. From the early settlers to today's citizens, Celeste has been blessed with honest, hard-working families who take pride in their community and work hard to preserve the wonderful town that I am honored to represent in the Fourth Congressional District of Texas.

The town of Celeste was born when Santa Fe Railroad officials purchased land situated in Hunt County, 50 miles from Dallas, on high rolling prairie between the north fork of the Sabine River and the south fork of the Red River and at the junction of the Missouri Pacific, Gulf Colorado and Santa Fe Railways. The engineers divided the town site into blocks and streets, and a public sale of town lots was held on April 19, 1887. The settlement was named Celeste in honor of one of the railroad official's daughters. On February 11, 1898, more than 20 residents and qualified voters met in the office of the Hunt County Judge for the purpose of incorporating Celeste, and an election was held on March 5, 1898, officially incorporating the town.

In the early years, and even before the railroad began to purchase land or lay tracks, numerous small settlements were established around what is now known as Celeste. Some families still reside in these communities; other

settlements are marked by graveyards and other markers, and their history is kept alive through the memories shared by those who once lived there. White Rock, Kingston, Prosperity, Alliance, Dulaney, Hackberry, Goosneck, Orange Grove, Hickory Creek, Hogeys (where Audie Murphy once lived), Nicholson, Midway, Bradburn, and Lane are some of the beloved settlements that were part of Celeste's early history.

Those were the days when small (sometimes one-room) schools were commonplace. Most of these communities established their own schools, and other beloved schools in the area included Antioch School, Crescent School, Davenport School, Sam Houston School, Prairie Hill School, Enterprise School, and Rainbow School. These eventually consolidated and most became part of the Celeste school system.

Churches also were vital to these communities, providing spiritual and moral guidance as well as a "meeting place" for social gatherings. Some of these churches remain active in their respective communities.

Records indicate that Celeste received its first postmaster in 1886. The post office was housed in several buildings until 1962, when a new building was dedicated by Congressman Ray Roberts, who traced its legacy to his predecessor, the Representative from the Fourth Congressional District and the great former Speaker of the House, Sam Rayburn.

For many years the Celeste Courier chronicled the events of this community. Births and deaths, school and church activities, commerce and crime, politics and social events, sports and other interests were reported for area residents. But of course much of the news also was shared in person by this close-knit community, most of whom know each other well.

Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to recognize this outstanding city in the Fourth Congressional District and to pay tribute to the citizens of Celeste, Texas, as they honor their hometown on the occasion of this wonderful celebration. Let us join today in celebrating the rich history of Celeste and wishing this community much happiness and prosperity for another hundred years.

HONORING THE CEDAREGE
POLICE DEPARTMENT

HON. SCOTT McINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 7, 2000

Mr. McINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a moment to recognize the Cedaredge Police Department for receiving the Colorado Association of Chief of Police Accreditation Award. This award is given to Departments that meet lofty and highly selective standards. This fitting award was accepted by Marshall Tom Early and Officers Archibeque and Beach of the Cedaredge Police Department.

According to the Chief of Police of Montrose, Colorado, Gary Meecham, in a recent article by Leeanna Mewhinney, "Many people do not know what it takes in order to get this honorable award. Over 160 standards

must be met and out of 300 agencies (police departments) in Colorado, only 3 departments on the Western Slope have received this, Cedaredge being one of them." This statement shows the dedication and hard work that is required to receive this distinguished recognition.

Police officers work very hard and often do not receive the recognition they truly deserve. It is with great honor that I congratulate the officers of Cedaredge Colorado for not only their recent award, but also their continued efforts to keep Western Colorado a safe environment for all its citizens.

As a former police officer, I am grateful for their service to our community, state and nation.

Congratulations!

TRIBUTE TO OPHELIA MEJIA

HON. DIANA DeGETTE

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 7, 2000

Ms. DeGETTE. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize the splendid efforts and notable accomplishments of an extraordinary woman in the 1st Congressional District of Colorado. It is both fitting and proper that we recognize this community leader for her exceptional record of civic leadership and invaluable service. It is to commend this outstanding citizen that I rise to honor Ophelia Mejia.

Ophelia Mejia has devoted a lifetime to improving the condition of children and families in the Denver area. Ophelia was born to parents who emigrated from Mexico and following her father's death at an early age, she graduated from Greeley High School and was employed at the Greeley Tribune while attending the University of Northern Colorado on a scholarship. There, she met her husband and subsequently, they had thirteen children.

Ms. Mejia began her distinguished career in early childhood care and development in the Park Hill area where she opened a family childcare home. She then taught preschool, became a director, and began to teach at the Community College of Aurora where she ultimately became department chair for the Early Childhood Education Department. In that capacity, she was able to access many grants in order that students who had difficulty paying tuition could still attend classes. She is now a specialist with the Community Development Institute, a Head Start Quality Improvement Center for Region VIII, where she provides training and technical assistance to sixteen Head Start Programs.

Ophelia has an impressive history of civic leadership. She is president of the Colorado Child Care Workforce, a board member of the Colorado Association for the Education of Young Children, and a member of the Colorado Child Care Commission. She also serves on the Professional Development and Distance Learning Committees of the Colorado Early Childhood Summit. She conducts bilingual and monolingual Spanish assessments of candidates for the Colorado Child Care Development Associate credential and has been on the advisory boards for the early childhood departments of Metropolitan State College, Emily